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By Sgt. Michelle Brown
134th Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska National Guard

Local responders strengthen efforts with critical multi-agency training

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — National Guardsmen from the Alaska National Guard's 103rd Civil Support Team and the Nebraska National Guard's 72nd Civil Support Team, assisted the Anchorage Fire Department with responding to a simulated HAZMAT situation at the Alaska State Public Health Lab yesterday during Exercise Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014.

In this drill, following a magnitude 9.2 earthquake, there was a simulated atmospheric hazardous contamination within a structurally-damaged building. The Anchorage Fire Department was responding to another incident and had limited resources in the area, so they called upon the National Guard to assist.

"It's very nice to work with other agencies, not only another civil support teams, but local fire departments and emergency managers," said Tech. Sgt. Donovan Garcia, a 72nd CST team chief.

The mission of a National Guard Civil Support Team is to identify and assess chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive agents.

The National Guard is prepared with highly-trained professionals and state-of-the-art equipment to respond and support incident commanders in any crisis.

"The first time we start working together shouldn't be at the time of a disaster," said Army Lt. Col. Wayne Don, 103rd Civil Support Team commander. "The perfect opportunity for us to establish critical relationships is during training."

Battalion Chief Tim Garbe, Anchorage Fire Department Battalion 3, was the first to arrive on scene. He established the incident command as part of a unified command with the National Guard unit and began to coordinate their efforts.

"This training provides a great service to the community," said Garbe. "It allows multiple agencies to exercise our ability to work together and be utilized in a manner that we would not function in day-to-day, but in a disaster situation we would absolutely need to rely on one another."

VG-AK14 is a regional, tactical exercise with multiple interagency field-training exercises that focus on response and recovery from a major earthquake and tsunami.

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Photo Cutlines to follow:

Check out our Flickr page for more photos from the exercise:

[flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/sets](https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/sets)

Photo cutlines

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Alaska National Guardsman Sgt. 1st Class Dutchy Inman, 103rd Civil Support Team CBRNE noncommissioned officer-in-charge, assesses a simulated atmospheric hazardous contamination at the Alaska State Public Health Lab during Exercise Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014, March 28. U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Sgt. Michelle Brown.

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Alaska National Guardsman Sgt. 1st Class Dutchy Inman, right, 103rd Civil Support Team CBRNE non-commissioned officer in charge, works with Travis Reier, Anchorage Fire Department, Station 1 engineer and HAZMAT technician, to assess a simulated atmospheric hazardous contamination at the Alaska State Public Health Lab during Exercise Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014, March 28. U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Sgt. Michelle Brown.

140328- Z- MZ867-067

Alaska National Guardsman Sgt. 1st Class Jason Rode, left, 103rd Civil Support Team, assists Travis Reier, Anchorage Fire Department, Station 1 engineer and HAZMAT technician, with removal of Level A hazardous material. National Guardsmen from Alaska and Nebraska joined efforts with the AFD to assess a simulated atmospheric hazardous contamination at the Alaska State Public Health Lab during Exercise Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014, March 28. U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Sgt. Michelle Brown.